

### Where can I find more information?

If you have any concerns or queries you may wish speak to your healthcare worker or contact your GP for advice. Alternatively, if you would like any further information the Public Health England website is another source of information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/carbapenem-resistance-guidance-data-and-analysis>



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

## **Toolkit for Managing Carbapenemase -producing Enterobacteriaceae in Non-acute and Community Settings**

### **Annex D:**

Advice for the family of a person who is a carrier of a Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (CPE)

## What does 'carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae' mean?

Enterobacteriaceae are bacteria that usually live harmlessly in the gut of humans. This is called 'colonisation' (a person is said to be a 'carrier'). However, if the bacteria get into the wrong place, such as the bladder or bloodstream they can cause infection. Carbapenems are one of the most powerful types of antibiotics. Carbapenemases are enzymes (chemicals), made by some strains of these bacteria, which allow them to destroy carbapenem antibiotics and so the bacteria are said to be resistant to the antibiotics.

## Why does carbapenem resistance matter?

Carbapenem antibiotics can only be given in hospital directly into the bloodstream. Until now, doctors have relied on them to successfully treat certain 'difficult' infections when other antibiotics have failed to do so. Therefore, in a hospital, where there are many vulnerable patients, spread of resistant bacteria can cause problems.

## Does carriage of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae need to be treated?

If a person is a carrier of carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae (sometimes called CPE), they do not need to be treated. As mentioned, these bacteria can live harmlessly in the gut. However, if the bacteria have caused an infection then antibiotics will be required.

## How are carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae spread?

In hospital when a patient is carrying these bacteria they can get into the ward environment and can then be spread by direct contact with that particular patient.

## Are the family at risk of contracting carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae?

Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae are not a risk to healthy people. The most important measure family members can take is to maintain good hand hygiene. Washing hands with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet. Good hygiene such as keeping toilet and bathroom areas clean and using separate towels are the best ways to prevent the spread. Clothes and laundry should be washed normally at the hottest temperature advised on the label.

## Will the close family have to be screened for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae if admitted to hospital?

When admitted, it is worth letting hospital staff know that a member of your household is or has been a carrier. Some hospitals may choose to screen close household contacts for carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae as part of the normal admission procedure.